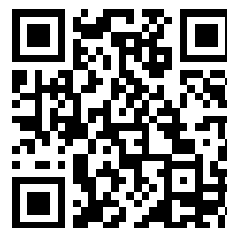

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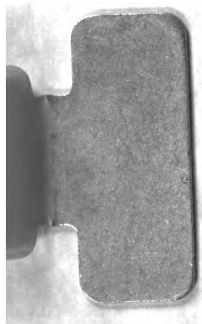
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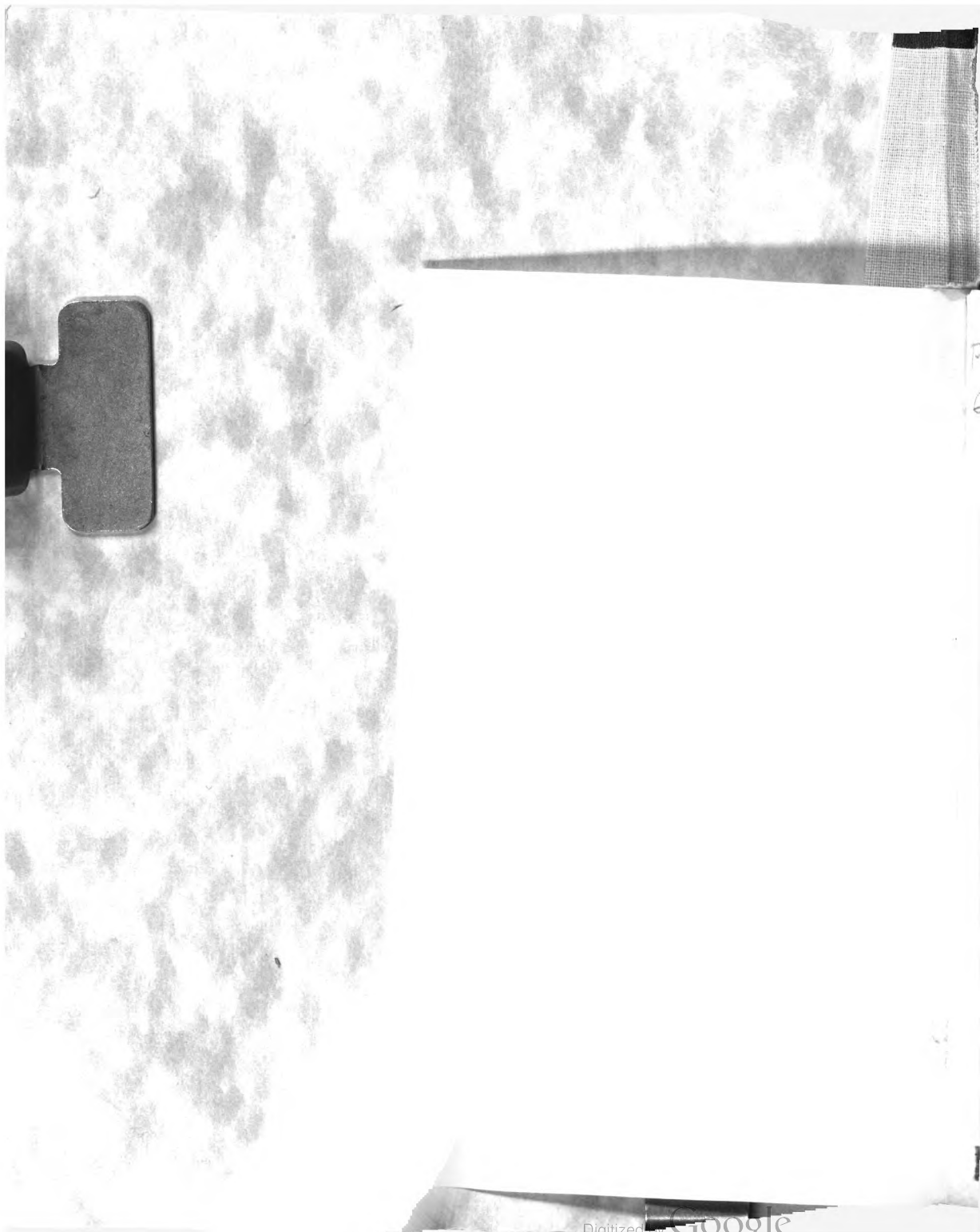


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THE LIBRARY
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RESCRIPT

OF HIS

HOLINESS POPE GREGORY XVI.

TO THE

FOUR ARCHBISHOPS OF IRELAND,

IN

REPLY TO THE APPEAL TO THE HOLY SEE

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

IN IRELAND.

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DUBLIN:

J. BROWNE, 36, NASSAU-STREET.

1841.

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ILLUSTRISSE AC REVERENDISSE DOMINE,

Quantam negotii gravitatem afferret excitata in Hibernia controversia de recenti Nationalis, ut vocant, erudiendæ juventutis systemate, exploratum adeo Amplitudini Tuæ est, ut mirum tibi esse non debuerit, Sacræ Congregationis de Propaganda Fide responsum de ea re tamdiu fuisse dilatum.

Plenam enim totius rei Amplitudo Tua habet notitiam, penitusque cognita Tibi sunt gravia omnia rationum momenta, quæ controversiæ illius excitandæ occasionem attulerunt, quæque diurnam prorsus rei deliberationem postularunt.

Nam Sacram Congregationem magnopere sollicitam habere debuerunt, cum diu multumque pro sui instituti munere quæstionem propositam consideraret, Catholicæ religionis tutela, puerilis ætatis instituendæ commoditas, grati animi officium erga Britannici Imperii senatum, qui magnam pecuniæ summam popularibus Hiberniæ scholis decrevit, concordiæ inter Episcopos Catholicos retinendæ necessitas, quietis publicæ fovendæ debitum, metus denique ne ad heterodoxos

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NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION. 3

MY LORD,

Your Grace is so fully aware of the grave importance of the question involved in the controversy which has been raised in Ireland, on the subject of the new system of National Education, as it is called, that you should not be surprised that the answer of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda thereon has been so long delayed.

For your Grace is fully in possession of the whole matter, and intimately acquainted with all the weighty reasons that have given rise to this controversy, and which demanded that the subject should be examined with the utmost deliberation.

Because the protection of the Catholic Religion—the facility afforded for the instruction of youth—the gratitude due to the British parliament for having granted a large sum of money for the support of schools for the people of Ireland—the necessity of preserving concord among Catholic Bishops—the duty of fostering the public tranquillity—the apprehension, in fine, lest the entire funds, together with the authority, should be transferred to masters not being

forte magistros, pecunia tota et auctoritas devolvatur.

Omnibus ergo rei periculis, et utilitatibus accurate perpensis, auditis partium disceptantium rationibus, habitaque præsertim felici notitia, quod per decennium, ex quo id systema studiorum susceptum fuit, Religio Catholica nihil detrimenti passa videatur, Sacra Congregatio, Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Gregorio Papa XVI., probante, censuit, nullum esse definite judicium hac super re proferendum, atque id genus eruditionis in Episcoporum singulorum prudenti arbitrio, et religiosa conscientia esse relinquendum, quandoquidem ejus successum à vigili Pastorum cura, à cautelis variis adhibendis, a futura demum per temporis tractum experientia pendere necesse est. Ne tamen sine idoneis consiliis et providentiis tanta res dimittatur, Sacra Congregatio sequentia interim monenda esse judicavit.

Catholics,—could not but have filled the Sacred Congregation with the greatest solicitude, during the long and earnest consideration which, in accordance with the duties of its office, it gave to the question submitted to it.

Having, therefore, accurately weighed all the dangers, and all the advantages of the system—having heard the reasoning of the contending parties—and having, above all, received the gratifying intelligence that, for ten years since the introduction of this system of education, the Catholic religion does not appear to have sustained any injury—the Sacred Congregation has, with the approbation of our Most Holy Father, Pope Gregory the XVI., resolved that no judgment should be definitively pronounced in this matter; and that this kind of education should be left to the prudent discretion and religious conscience of each individual bishop, whereas its success must depend on the vigilant care of the pastors, on the various cautions to be adopted, and the future experience which time will supply. That, however, so momentous a question should not be dismissed without suitable counsel and precautions, the Sacred Congregation has decided on giving the following admonitions:—

Scilicet 1o. Libros omnes, qui noxium aliquid sive adversus Sacrorum Bibliorum canonem, aut puritatem, sive contra Catholicæ Ecclesiæ doctrinam, vel mores continent, à scholis removeri debere. Hoc autem eo facilius effici potest, quia nulla memorati systematis lex obstat.

2o. Dandam esse pro viribus operam, ut Præceptor Normalis pedagogorum Catholicorum in classe religiosa, morali, et historica, vel Catholicus, vel nullus sit. Nam Catholicum ab Acatholico religionis tradendæ methodum, vel religiosam historiam doceri indecorum est.

3o. Tutius multo esse ut literarum tantummodo humanarum magisterium fiat in scholis promiscuis, quam ut fundamentales, ut aiunt, et communes religionis Christianæ articuli restricte tradantur, reservata singulis sectis peculiari seorsum eruditione. Ita enim cum pueris agere periculosum valde videtur.

4o. Generatim Episcopos et Parochos advigilare oportere, ne ex hoc systemate Nationalis Institutionis, pueris Catholicis quamlibet ob causam, labes obveniat; eo-

1st. That all books which contain any noxious matter either against the canon or the purity of the Sacred Scriptures, or against the doctrine of the Catholic Church, or morality, ought to be removed from the schools; and this can be the more easily effected, because there is no law of the said system opposed to it.

2d. That every effort is to be made, that none but a Catholic preceptor shall give religious, moral, or historical lectures to the Catholic Schoolmasters in the Model School; for it is not fitting that a Catholic should be taught the method of giving instruction in religion or religious history by one who is not a Catholic.

3d. That it is much safer that literary instruction only should be given in mixed schools, than that the fundamental articles, as they are called, and the articles in which all Christians agree, should alone be taught there in common, reserving for separate instruction the tenets peculiar to each sect; for this manner of acting, in regard to children, appears very dangerous.

4th. That generally the Bishops and Parish Priests should carefully watch that no taint be contracted by the Catholic children from this system of national instruc-

rumdem etiam esse, enixe curare, ut a Supremis Moderatoribus, meliorem in dies rerum ordinem, et conditiones æquiores impetrent. Illud quoque perutile fore censet Sacra Congregatio, si loca ipsa scholarum, in Episcoporum, vel Parochorum potestate, ac proprio jure manerent. Existimat simul permagnæ futurum esse utilitatis, Episcopos de tam gravi negotio in Provincialibus synodis invicem sæpe conferre. Si autem quid adversum accidet, Sedes Apostolica certior facienda sedulo est, ut ipsa simul provideat.

Denique optat Sacra Congregatio, ut deinceps Episcopi, alique viri Ecclesiastici abstineant a contendendo super hac controversia in publicis ephemeridibus, vel ejusmodi aliis libellis, ne religionis honor, mutua fama, et Christiana charitas, cum populi offensione lædatur.

Hæc Amplitudini Tuæ, a me Sacræ Congregationis nomine, erant significanda, ut per Te, RR. PP. DD. Episcopis Metropolitanæ Provinciæ Tuæ Suffraganeis communicentur. Quæ vero superius significavi,

tion, through any cause whatever ; and that it is also their duty strenuously to endeavour to obtain from the government, by degrees, a better order of things, and more equitable conditions. The Sacred Congregation is also of opinion, that it would be very useful that the School-houses should be vested exclusively in the Bishops or the Parish Priests. It is further of opinion, that it would be of very great advantage that the Bishops should frequently confer together on this very important subject, in their provincial synods ; but that, should any thing unfavourable occur, the Apostolic See should be carefully made acquainted with it, that it may at once provide for the exigency.

In fine, the Sacred Congregation desires, that henceforward the Bishops and other Ecclesiastics should refrain from contending on this controversy in the newspapers, or other such publications, lest the honour of religion, their own characters, or Christian charity, should be injured, to the disedification of the people.

These are what I had to make known to your Grace, in the name of the Sacred Congregation, that they may be communicated by you to the right reverend the Suffragan Bishops of your metropolitan province.



10 THE POPE'S LETTER ON THE

talia esse Amplitudo Tua quoque facile  
intelliget, ut iisdem diligenter servatis, in  
ista re tantæ gravitatis, interea satis religioni,  
satis tranquillitati, et juvenilis ætatis bono  
consultum esse concludendum sit.

Precor Deum interea, ut Amplitudinem  
Tuam, diu sospitem ac felicem servet.  
Amplitudinis Tuæ.

Romæ, ex ædibus Sacræ Congregationis  
de Propaganda Fide.

Die 16 Januarii, 1841.

Ad officia Paratissimus.

J. PH. CARD. FRANSONIUS, Præf.

J. ARCH. EDESSEN, e Secr.

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION. 11

Now the matters which I have above communicated to you, your Grace will easily understand to be of such a nature, that if they are carefully attended to, it is to be concluded that, in this most important affair, the interests of religion, of peace, and of the youth, are for the present sufficiently provided for.

In the mean time, I pray God to give your Grace a long and happy life.

Given at Rome, at the Propaganda, the  
16th January, 1841.

(Signed)

J. PH. FRANSONI, Prefect.

J., ARCHBISHOP OF EDESSA, Secy

TO THE

EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN EVENING POST.

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SIR,

*Permit me to lay before the public a correct view of the document lately received from Rome concerning the National System of Education. It is calculated to preserve the public mind from the impressions of the over-zealous and the ignorant writers on the subject.*

CANDIDUS.

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It is said, that Rome has not *approved* the system, and that the document in question rather implies disapprobation. We reply:—

1. The System had been going on for ten years, working conformably to the ordinary laws of church government—that is, each Bishop (judge in the first instance) acting according to his judgment in his diocess.

2. After that time, some of the Prelates (from motives which we perfectly respect) brought the matter before the Holy See, and the object of their appeal was necessarily two-fold:—

1o. To supersede the ordinary jurisdiction till now exercised in this cause, by the sentence of the superior tribunal—a sentence binding upon all.

2o. To have this sentence *condemnatory* of the system of education called National—at least, unless essential changes were wrought in it. This appears from the nature of the evidence sent in—viz., that there was danger of perversion—that the books contained errors contrary to faith, &c.—evidence which, if found valid, could elicit from Rome nothing short of condemnation.

3. The Prelates who admitted the system, appeared as Respondents to the appeal; but their application to the Holy See was purely defensive.

1o. They never called upon it to decide; but were satisfied that matters should be allowed to go on as they had done before.

2o. They never asked for any *approbation* of the system.

4. The cause, therefore, before the Court of Rome was, not "*utrum damnandum aut approbandum*," whether condemnation or approbation should be pronounced; but simply, *whether condemnation should be pronounced, or matters left as they were.*

5. The sentence was the latter alternative. Therefore—

1o. The call for an authoritative interference, supersedatory of the ordinary authority, was rejected.

2o. The call for a condemnation was refused.

6. This constitutes all that the decision could be expected to give. But the rejection of an appeal gives the cause, as matter of course, to the Respondent.

7. It is said, this is no *approbation*. True; but *no one asked the Holy See for an approbation*. There was no case before it, on which even to think of granting it.

8. It may be asked, *would* Rome have approved of the system, had formal approbation been asked? We say, probably not. Because—

1o. Every one conversant with the practice of the Church knows that it will condemn error, but does not give formal approbation to what is right. It leaves

it to take its course. This is the practice of every tribunal. Acquittal,—“*nec ego te condemnabo*,”—the refusal to condemn, is the only declaration of innocence it will pronounce. This is the case in Rome, especially regarding books: it condemns bad ones, but *never* APPROVES the best.

20. The respondent Prelates themselves do not consider the National System is a perfect thing to be submitted to Rome for *approbation*. It is a boon not so complete by any means as they would wish: for what Catholic would not be glad to see his own religion taught to all, and everywhere? But it is a boon incalculably better than any ever before offered, and, moreover, offered in good faith; and the system may be kept sufficiently under ecclesiastical inspection, to prevent the evils that might otherwise arise from the imperfection of the system. It is, therefore, not to be expected that approbation would be formally asked for or pronounced. Similar instances have occurred: *e. g.* the taking of the oath of allegiance to the House of Hanover after the expulsion of the Stuarts, whom the Holy See still recog-

nised as sovereigns : this oath was never approved of, but was not therefore condemned, nor even disapproved of; as it can be shown that the Holy See allowed, and perhaps wished, Catholics to take it, without its pronouncing a sanction.—Rome would not *approve* the present parliamentary oath for Catholics, yet its not condemning it, is all that is asked or desired. It is not such an oath as we should ourselves have framed, or could have wished—still, we are glad to have it instead of the oath of supremacy, &c.

9. But there are clauses and expressions in the document in question, which must satisfy us of the wishes and feelings of the Holy See.

10. The mention of the grant for education, as a subject of gratitude. This could not be so considered, if the Holy See saw even reason to suspect that the motive or the tendency of the grant was to endanger the faith of the children. Would similar gratitude have been expressed towards the Kildare-street grant?

20. The appeal to ten years experience of success, is a clear rejection of the ground brought forward to obtain con-

demnation, viz.—that there was danger of perversion.

3o. The very fact of adding admonitions and cautions, implies anything but condemnation. Like the clauses and conditions in a dispensation, they *confirm* what they are applied to.

4o. The very exhortation to the prelates to try to get *better* terms, &c., supposes the contrary of the present ones being bad.

5o. The objection to the masters being taught *certain* things specified by Protestant teachers, implies that no objection is made to their being taught others.

10. The conclusions we may draw from all these reflections seem to be the following:—

1o. That Rome, after a long and full examination of most voluminous evidence, has seen no reason to fear perversion of the faithful by the National Education system.

2o. That it did not think there was ground for condemning any of the denounced books.

3o. That it has rejected the appeal to it for condemnation of the System.



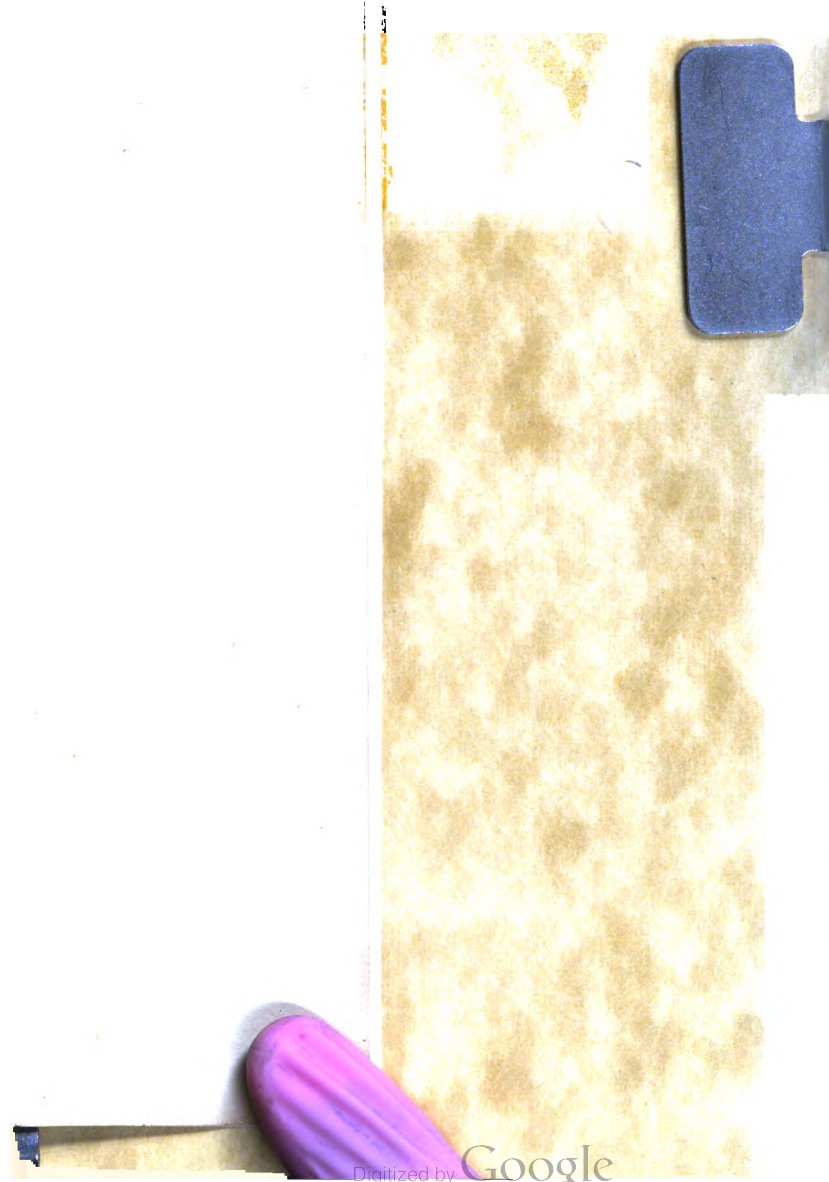
4o. That if it has not formally sanctioned it, such sanction, 1o. is not conformable to usage; 2o. it was never asked.

5o. That, however, there is sufficient evidence in the document to satisfy the minds of impartial persons of its leaning to the favourable side.

11. We may observe, in conclusion, that none of the modifications it proposes affect essentially the system. In fact, the greater part, if not all, have long existed.

FINIS.

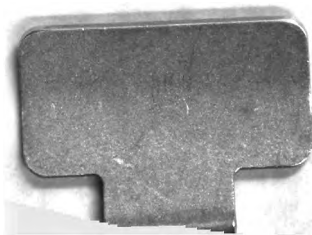
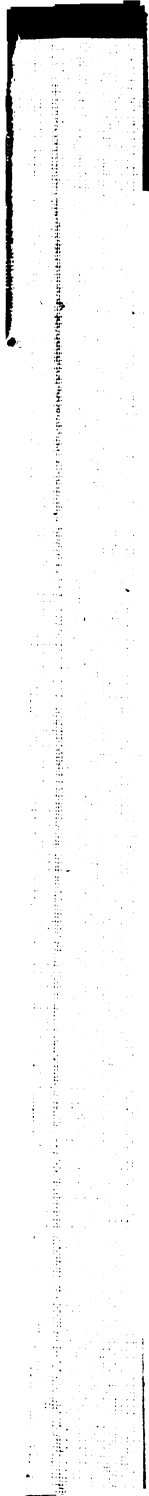
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